

Report of the Director of City Development and Assistant Chief Executive Citizens & Communities

Report to Executive Board

Date: 10th February 2016

Subject: Community Asset Transfer of Old Cockburn Sports Hall to Hamara Healthy Living Centre

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| Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): City & Hunslet | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Is the decision eligible for Call-In? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number: | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

Summary of main issues

- 1 Members will recall that the Old Cockburn Sports Hall was one of ten community centres identified in the November 2014 Executive Board report for consultation upon its future. The consultation identified community asset transfer as the preferred method to ensure the future of the centre.
- 2 An invite for Expressions of Interest was issued in October and Hamara Healthy Living Centre was the only organisation to submit an expression of interest. Hamara intend to operate the centre as a community sports centre to promote health and wellbeing and community cohesion.
- 3 After assessing the proposal this report recommends a 25 year lease at nil premium and peppercorn rent to enable the Hamara Healthy Living Centre to operate the sports hall as a community facility.

Recommendations

- 4 Executive Board is recommended to approve:
 - i) The community asset transfer of Old Cockburn Sports Hall to Hamara Healthy Living Centre by way of a 25 year full repairing and insuring year lease at nil premium and peppercorn rental. The Director of City

Development will be responsible for ensuring that this recommendation is implemented;

- ii) Revenue grant support of £55,000 to be paid in instalments of £20,000 in 2016/17, £20,000 in 2017/18 and £15,000 in 2018/19 funded from the savings arising from this proposal. The Assistant Chief Executive Citizens & Communities will be responsible for ensuring that this recommendation is implemented.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to approve a 25 year peppercorn lease for Old Cockburn Sports Hall to Hamara Healthy Living Centre in line with the Community Asset Transfer policy and to approve revenue grant support of £55,000 to be paid in instalments over the first three years.

2 Background information

- 2.1 Old Cockburn Sports Hall is a purpose built sports facility which was constructed in 1978. It was initially part of the Sports Service, before moving into the youth centre portfolio and latterly becoming part of the community centre portfolio. The property is located on Primrose Lane in the Burton Road area of Leeds 11, just off Dewsbury Road. Please see the site plan attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Current usage levels are limited. Youth Services is the main user operating out of the centre for eight hours per week. Other users include a majorettes group and the Leeds United Foundation. Total use is only eighteen hours per week.
- 2.3 Due to limited use the centre was identified as one of ten centres within the community centre portfolio whose future would be subject to consultation. That consultation concluded that “an asset transfer would be the best approach to secure the future of this building”. Accordingly during October expressions of interest were sought from community organisations interested in taking over the centre. One completed expression of interest was received from Hamara Healthy Living Centre.
- 2.4 Hamara Healthy Living Centre is a company limited by guarantee and in 2014 celebrated its tenth year of serving the community. The organisation is based in purpose built premises on Tempest Road in Leeds 11 and employs 20 staff. Hamara works primarily, but not exclusively, with the South Asian community and provides information and advice, health promotion / education, older people’s services, learning disabilities services, women’s activities, sports and exercise, youth services, community cohesion and training programmes. The organisation is well regarded both within its sector and by statutory agencies in Leeds. It delivers contracts to a number of statutory organisations including Leeds City Council and the NHS.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 Hamara has submitted an outline business plan and provided further clarification to questions from officers. They propose to operate the centre as a community sports venue with a focus on community cohesion.
- 3.2 The centre will provide a meeting point and place for informal and formal provision; new flexible space will accommodate diverse group activities, sporting and social events. The project will enable local children, young people, adults and older people to maximise their potential and improve their wellbeing and quality of life by providing complementary sports facilities within the community. Co-locating services will facilitate the delivery of a more holistic approach, encourage co-

production and lead to the development of innovative, relevant services to benefit the community.

- 3.3 A draft programme of activity has been developed which will see the centre brought into use for 59 hours per week delivering a variety of services. Through the daytime the centre will offer activities with a focus on older people and people with learning disabilities. This will generate income that can be hard to realise in a traditional sports centre. Indeed the centre currently has no daytime weekday use. Evening activities will include the current users and activities aimed at the wider community, including a five a side football league, sessional hire and Box-teq. Weekend use will include activities provided by the Leeds United Foundation, karate, cricket and football. Additionally a community gym will be established in a separate room.
- 3.4 The building requires some investment and Hamara propose to invest £20,000 in refurbishment works as well as a further £10,000 for purchase of equipment for the gym.
- 3.5 A 25 year lease has been requested and Hamara will take on full repairing and insuring liabilities. The lease will restrict use to a community sports facility. The agreement will be at nil premium and peppercorn rental.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 Consultation on the future of the centre took place between December 2014 and March 2015.
- 4.1.2 Details of the consultation were provided to community centre users and disseminated through social media and local networks. Information relating to running costs, income, maintenance costs and percentage of usage were provided as part of the consultation.
- 4.1.3 The outcome of the consultation has been published by the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities). The consultation concluded that “an asset transfer would be the best approach to secure the future of the building”.
- 4.1.4 City & Hunslet Ward Members have been consulted and are supportive of the recommendation.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 An equality screening exercise has been carried out and a copy of the screening document is attached at Appendix 2. The screening found there were no negative impacts for the protected characteristics. The daytime use of the centre will have a focus on older people and learning disabilities and the provision of this service will be beneficial to people from those groups. Furthermore, Hamara will seek to further community cohesion by making the centre available to, and actively encouraging use by all sections of the community. There will be positive impacts for older people and people with learning disabilities and for community cohesion.

4.3 Council policies and Best Council Plan

4.3.1 The vision for Leeds 2011 - 2030 sets out the long term aim for Leeds to be the Best City in the UK. Key aims are that: Our communities will thrive and people will be confident, skilled, enterprising, active and involved; and that Leeds is the best city for children and young people to grow up in – to study work and play. The best council plan 2015-20 contains the objectives of 'supporting communities and tackling poverty' and 'becoming a more efficient and enterprising council' which includes respectively the priorities of 'strengthening local accountability and being more responsive to the needs of local communities' and 'reducing the number of council buildings through better sharing of assets'. The proposed Community Asset Transfer fits well within these policies.

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 In 2014/15 the centre had actual net operational running costs of around £25,000. This was an improvement of £15,000 over the previous year. The improvement was achieved through efficiencies in the day to day management of the centre.

4.4.2 Hamara has requested grant support for the first three years of operation. The grant will be payable in three instalments of £20,000 in 2016/17, £20,000 in 2017/18 and £15,000 in 2018/19. The Assistant Chief Executive Citizens & Communities is supportive of the asset transfer and the provision or grant support from the Community Centres budget.

4.4.3 Based on the 2014/15 net running costs the project will achieve savings of £5,000 in both 2016/17 and 2017/18 and £10,000 in 2018/19. For the remaining 22 years of the lease will represent a saving of £25,000 per year.

4.4.4 The Head of Land & Property advises that an unrestricted 25 year lease of the property would have a value in the range of £132,000 to £141,000.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 The agreement will be subject to a 25 year lease which will be prepared by officers in Legal Services. There are no Access to Information implications. The decisions recommended in this report are eligible for Call In.

4.5.2 The lease will be contracted outside the terms of the Landlord & Tenant Act 1954, so the tenant will have no automatic right to renew.

4.5.3 Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that a local authority shall not dispose of land for less than the best consideration reasonably obtainable without the consent of the Secretary of State. The Local Government Act 1972: General Disposal Consent (England) 2003 permits local authorities to dispose of land for less than best consideration where:

- the difference between the unrestricted value of the land and the consideration for the disposal does not exceed £2,000,000; and

- the purpose for which the land is to be disposed of is likely to contribute to the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the area.

4.5.4 In this case, the difference between the unrestricted value of the land and the consideration for the disposal is within the parameter indicated above. In addition, the asset transfer of Old Cockburn Sports Hall to Hamara Healthy Living Centre will promote/improve the economic/social/environmental well-being of the area by providing for additional public sessions for fitness and other healthy activities in the local area, reducing journey times to other facilities and promoting more community cohesion.

4.5.5 The City Solicitor is therefore of the opinion that the proposed disposal falls within the terms of the Local Government Act 1972: General Disposal Consent (England) 2003.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 Hamara has produced a risk register as part of the business plan, and in the opinion of officers, it is adequate for the project.

4.6.2 The main risk to the council is that Hamara fail to operate the centre sustainably so seek to surrender the lease. This would result in the council having to take the building back. The likelihood is considered low given Hamara's excellent track record. The impact is considered low as well because the council would be in no worse position than it currently is having responsibility for the centre now.

5 Conclusions

5.1 Hamara is a well established local community organisation that has been delivering services to the community in Leeds for over eleven years. This project will give them an opportunity to use the building to improve health and wellbeing and community cohesion in one of the most deprived communities in Leeds. Their ability to run a significant programme of daytime activities for people with learning disabilities and older people gives them an advantage over the current model of direct management by the council, by generating income throughout the day.

5.2 In the long term the proposal will achieve a revenue efficiency saving for the council and will achieve positive social outcomes, particularly with regards to health and wellbeing and community cohesion.

6 Recommendations

6.1 Executive Board is recommended to approve:

- i) The community asset transfer of Old Cockburn Sports Hall to Hamara Healthy Living Centre by way of a 25 year full repairing and insuring year lease at nil premium and peppercorn rental. The Director of City Development will be responsible for ensuring that this recommendation is implemented.

- ii) Revenue grant support of £55,000 to be paid in instalments of £20,000 in 2016/17, £20,000 in 2017/18 and £15,000 in 2018/19 funded from the savings arising from this proposal. The Assistant Chief Executive Citizens & Communities will be responsible for ensuring that this recommendation is implemented.

7 Background documents¹

7.1 None.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.